Scheme for protection of Gir Lion

1293. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that a scheme for protection, conservation and rearing of Gir Lion was launched in 1972; and

(b) if so, the population of this endangered species in 1972, and at the beginning of Fifth, Sixth Seventh and Eighth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH):

(a) Yes,Sir.

(b) The Census of lions in Gir forests is carried out every fifth year and therefore it is not possible to give the correct population of lions exactly in the years asked for. However the population of lions over the years has been as follows:

Year	Number of Lions
1969	177
1974	180
1979	205
1985	239
1990	284

Depleting population of lions, tigers and Wild Cats

1294. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the population of lions, tigers, and other wild cats has been depleting in different States and Union Territories during the last ten years, despite the implementation of various projects like Project Tiger;

(b) if so, what was the specie-wise population of wild cats, State/Sanctuary-wise, in the beginning and at the end of Sixth and Seventh Five Year Plans, indicating also the latest figures; and

(c) what further steps are being taken for effective protection of the endangered species?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) No Sir, The Census figures for Lions, Tigers and Panthers show an increasing trend in the population. However, no census of lesser cats have been carried out on all India level. Readily available State-wise figures for Tigers for the years 1979, 1984 and 1989 and the leapard population in 1984 and 1989 are given in the enclosed *statement* (*See* below.)

The Lions are found only in Gujarat. Its population in 1990 was 284 as against 239 in 1985 and 205 in 1979.

(c) The steps taken by the Govt. for effective protection of endangered species include:

(i) A network of sancturaries and national parks representing all the Zoo geographical zones has been set up. There are at present 73 naional parks and 413 wildlife sancturaries, extending over an area of 1,37,000 Sq. Kms.

(ii) Financial assistance is provided to State Governments for meeting the expenditure on development of national parks/sanctuaries.

(iii) Government of India has been assisting the States in their anti-poaching activities under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Control of poaching and Illegal trade in Wildlife". An amount of Rs. 1.00 crores was provided as assistance under this scheme for strengthening antipoaching infrastructure in the States during the VII Five Year Plan. During 1990-91, Rs 18.58 lakhs and Rs. 40.09 lakhs for the year 1991-92 has been sanctioned under this scheme. Now the scheme together with resources has been transferred to the States as recommended by N.D.C.